

THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE**Thursday, December 07, 2006****Ireland dedicates Women's Health Center, a \$1.3 million renovation, this afternoon***By RACHAEL TOLLIVER/Turret Associate Editor*

Dr. (Lt. Gen.) Kevin Kiley, the Army Surgeon General, will join Ireland Army Community Hospital commander, Dr. (Col.) Steven Braverman for a dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony on Fort Knox at Ireland's new Women's Health Center today at 2 p.m.

The Women's Health Center is part of a \$1.3 million renovation project at the hospital and will provide improved access to obstetric and gynecological services for Soldiers, military retirees, and family members, according to Maj. Shelley James, the chief of Women's Health Services at Ireland.

"This provides easier access for the patients and for the staff," she explained. "(Patients) won't get lost going from place to place—like from the O.B clinic to labor and delivery—and it's a better location. The women, the staff, and the medical charts are all in one place."

She added that the comfort of female patients and the atmosphere of the family center were two changes the hospital achieved.

Part of the renovations include two new ultra sound machines, three new non-stress test fetal monitors, and a breastfeeding room.

The facility, located on the third floor of Ireland, has had a face-lift that included the removal of the green tile and the accompanying sterile institutional look, a new paint job, wallpaper, framed artwork, a check-in desk that did not exist before, and light covers above each exam table that display a relaxing (if possible) focal point.

Capt. Micael Reuter, the head nurse in labor and delivery, said the hospital is equipped to keep new mothers from 24 to 48 hours, unless otherwise necessary.

"We operate on a family center care basis—'rooming in'—with the baby in the room," she said. "The baby stays with the mother all the time, unless a medical procedure is necessary, and then the parents can attend."

She also said that the staff monitors each mother for signs of post-partum depression.

"In discharge, it is one of our key points. If the mother has had problems in the past with other pregnancies (depression), we automatically follow up with a social worker before leaving the hospital," she further explained. "We also follow up with single Soldiers or single parents. (Army Community Services) follows with them as well before they leave to make sure they get what they need. But if a young family is having financial problems or doesn't have something they really need (like a baby car seat) we can help them, too."

With a new infantry brigade scheduled to complete its arrival next fall, the hospital is expecting a sharp increase in the number of women the center will treat.

"The next five months, compared to the last five months, the delivery rate will go up by an average of

36 percent,” James explained. “When the rest of the brigade gets here we will see an overall 10 percent increase for all the hospital.”

Ireland is expecting 70 births in December, and had 49 deliveries in November, which was up by 25 percent from that time last year, James said. The hospital has already hired a new mid-wife, nurse practitioner and medical assistance to help with the increased work load, and will try to hire additional personnel.

James said she has a hard-working staff that cares about the patients it serves, and is committed to the overall mission for the center, which is to provide excellence in women’s health services through the life span of each female patient, “from the first period, to post menopause, and all of a woman’s life transitions.”

“My personal goal is to make sure the women get the care they need,” she said. “We are caring for Soldiers and their families, and we want them to know that, especially when deployed, so they know their families are taken care of.”

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